1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

of the head of the compound will, one evening, tell the bride to take fire (a faggot) to the bridegroom's hut in order that she may have light 'to sweep the floor', and she will add, 'you need not return'. Next morning people will know that the girl is So-and-so's wife. (I asked my informant if the youth for whom this marriage had been arranged knew all about it. He replied: 'The father of the youth would always be performing small services for his *dem* (in-laws), such, for example, as sending them fire-wood. The future bridegroom would be used as a messenger on such occasions and in this manner would get to know his future wife.') A man's senior 'father' is responsible for finding the cows for the bride-price (*sul*). If a man wants a second or third wife, he will help his father by giving some of his own cows, if he has got any by his own labours. 'If your father is too poor and your mother's brother is a rich man, he may pay for the cows for your wife, but that becomes a debt, for if you do not pay him back, he will claim your children after your death. You will pay him back by using the cows you receive for your own daughter.'

'A son-in-law will work on his *dem-pok's* ground-nut farm (*suma-pog*) once a year and help her in the sowing and harvest, and also assist his father-in-law in building. He will do all this until his wife bears him a child and then cease doing so, because then he will be looking out for a new wife and have then to work for these new in-laws. Every new harvest he will take new beer (*da'-palem*) and a guinea-fowl and go with his wife to visit his parents-in-law. On this occasion, the wife becomes like a man, by virtue of her husband, and gives the guinea-fowl as an offering to her father's spirit, or if he is alive, to his *Wen* (*Tini* shrine). If she were an unmarried girl at home, she could not do so. A son-in-law attends his parents-in-law's funeral, taking a sheep and goat and beer. He will also attend a brother-in-law's funeral taking a pot of beer "to pour on the grave" (*se yaug*). A son-in-law will also assist in digging a parent-in-law's grave, and even sleep at his village and resume digging next morning and dig out all the stones. When we dig a grave and come down to rock, we generally place an egg there, and fill in the hole, but when a man has many sons-in-law they will dig up the rock. As long as a man's wife has not borne a child, the son-in-law must send his mother-in-law five baskets of grain each new harvest. He stops doing so when she has a child, for after that they will at once demand payment of the *sul* (bride-price).'

'A man must respect his parents-in-law; if he offends them, he

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

606 will lose his wife; they can take her from him and return him the cows.'

607 603 648 *Privileged Familiarity*: 'A man may play and be familiar with his sister's husband. A man can also be familiar with his grandparents, for when a man has grand-children who drag him about, he blesses the Sky-God.[1] We, Kusase, also "play together" (*deem taba*) with the Mampruse and the Gurense, because these tribes intermarry with us, and we have never sold each other, but the Moshi we never play with, for we used to sell them for food. The Gambaga and Bawku people, however, play with the Moshi, saying when they meet one, "Where do you come from, you worthless thing; I have heard that the Chief of your town is dead?" The Moshi will reply, "You fellow with the filed teeth, get out of my way; be off with you", and he will rush right into a man's compound as if it belonged to him.

'A man's mother's brother's daughter's husband (*daki*) may beat him in fun. A man can swear at his wife's brothers (*ti tu tab*); we curse each other.' 607

582 *Marriages Prohibited and Allowed*: 'Kusase do not marry Moshi women; they eat fowls, when they ought to eat guinea-fowls.' As long as your own wife is alive, you must not marry your wife's sister's daughter. You may marry your wife's sister while your wife is still alive, but not a *nyere*[2] sister. A son may not marry a father's widow, because a son sacrifices to his father's spirit.[3] [587]

764 *Kusase Funeral Customs*: The Kusase do not bury even a *Yi-dan* (head of a compound) in a room or yard of his compound, but outside in the *saman* farm. The head of a compound is, however, given a separate and new grave (*yaog*); this is round with a circular bottle-neck mouth. The soil is not filled in. The mouth of the grave is covered with a pot and plastered over with earth (see Fig. 88).

Graves are not communal, at most two persons being buried in one grave. The second person so buried may not be,

(*a*) Junior to the first.
(*b*) *Nyere* to him or her.
(*c*) Any wife, save the last surviving.
(*d*) Two children may not be buried in the same grave 'because they would quarrel'.

A male is buried in a goat skin; a female buried naked, save for a

[1] A grandchild may not look into a grandparent's ears or he or she will become deaf.
[2] See p. 8. [3] But see p. 508.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

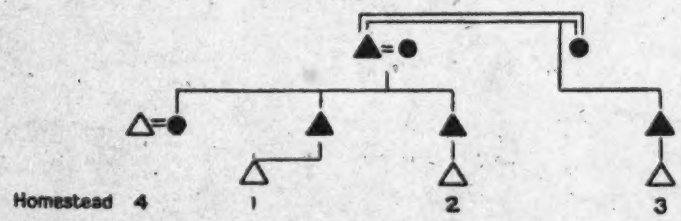
613 It will be seen that both affinal and cognatic kinship ties regulate the
621 collocation of homesteads.
166 *Section: Zalmwuuri.* (A local subdivision of Datɔk, named after the stream forming one of its boundaries.)

Homestead 1. This belongs to Latammi, a man of about 55, whose father, a Gar man, came to build his house and to farm here about fifty years ago. He died and was buried at his new home. Latammi, his eldest son, then inherited the homestead and the surrounding farm-land, and remained living there.

Homestead 2. About 200 yards away, is owned by Latammi's father's younger brother's (*pit soog*) son. This young man formerly shared Latammi's homestead but recently moved out to set up in his own.

Homestead 3. About 250 yards away from 1. Latammi's father's half-brother (*sunɔ*) built this homestead, having come to settle here shortly after Latammi's father. This man died recently and the homestead and surrounding farm-land now belong to his son.

The following genealogy shows how the heads of these three homesteads are related:



Together they constitute a lineage of small span, a segment of a greater lineage whose home is at Gar. Their residential collocation is exactly the same as it would be if they were living at Gar or in any of the older settlements.

Homestead 4. About 200 yards from 1. This is the homestead of a Ba'ari man who migrated to Datɔk about three years ago. He is a brother-in-law (sister's husband) (*dakii*) of Latammi's late father (see genealogy above), and was, on this account, given land on which to build and settle by the latter's half-brother's son of Homestead 3.

Homestead 5. About a quarter of a mile from 1. This belongs to Naambon, whose father, a man from Bɔlɔga, came to build and settle here some forty years ago. This man had first migrated from Bɔlɔga to Kosabɔlɔg, on the outskirts of Duusi. While he was living there Teroog (now an old man), a member of the same maximal lineage as Latammi's father, who lives in another section of Datɔk, married one of the Bɔlɔga man's daughters. The land he held at Duusi proved to be unsatisfactory, so Naambon's father decided to move to Datɔk. Through the good offices
● [606] of his son-in-law, Teroog, he was introduced to Latammi's father, who (as a son-in-law (*deem*) in the classificatory sense) gave him land to settle on near the fringe of the huge area he had marked out as a farm for himself.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

It is analogous to the way in which a man's agnatic descendants become liable for his sins, though it is not so rigorous and consequential in action as the responsibility for sins and delicts that adheres to the male line. *Tyuk* is connected primarily with males; though it is of minor significance in the social definition of uterine kinship, compared with witchcraft, it obviously fits in with the principles of Tale social organization in the same way.[1]

Uterine Kinship as a Personal Bond

As we have observed, the fundamental distinction between uterine kinship and agnatic descent is that the former does not give rise to corporate units of social structure. *Soog* is essentially a personal bond, a bond of mutual interest and concern uniting individual to individual. Witchcraft, similarly, is an individual act of mystical aggression due to personal malice against an individual. The model of the relations between *saarət* is the affection, devotion, and strong feeling of mutual identification that prevails between parent and child or between full siblings of the same sex. Its keynote is mutual trust as between equals. It is never thought of as a matter of rights and duties but as a matter of sentiment, of spontaneous goodwill and intimate, personal confidence. Hence the term *soog* is often loosely used to refer to someone with whom one has a relationship of a similar sort, or to denote a very close relative of a class of relatives, whether or not they are true *saarət*. An intimate and trusted friend is like your *soog*, the Tallensi say. Two daughters of the same lineage, but of unrelated mothers, married into a single joint family feel themselves to be particularly closely related and identified with each other by contrast with their conjugal family, and thus speak of each other as 'my *soog*'. The children of two men who were uterine kin, keeping up the friendship of their fathers, talk of themselves as *saarət*. Two men of the same lineage, whether they are close or distant agnates, who have a common maternal uncle's lineage (*ahsb yiri*)—i.e. whose mothers' brothers belong to a single segment of a maximal lineage—feel a bond of personal kinship distinguishing their relationship with each other from their relationships with their co-members of the lineage. In contexts where they wish to emphasize their personal bonds in contrast to their common membership of the lineage they might describe each other as 'my *soog*'. And I once heard a man refer to his son-in-law as 'my *soog* son-in-law (*n-deem-soog*)'. This is a contradiction in terms, for marriage being prohibited between kin of any degree, a man cannot be both a son-in-law and a *soog*. But the speaker explained that he was using this term in order to distinguish

[1] There is an interesting psychological problem here, but it lies outside our present scope. *Tyuk* and witchcraft might be regarded as the male and female aspects, respectively, of deep-seated vindictive impulses connected with the mother.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 611 602 this son-in-law from his other sons-in-law, both because this young man was the husband of his own daughter, whereas the others were the husbands of his dead brothers' daughters, and because this son-in-law was as devoted to him as his own sons. Tallensi often say that a man's own children are virtually his *saarət*, though not technically so. There is no confusion in the native mind about these usages of the concept of *soog*; they understand and explain clearly that these are metaphorical usages.

835 The feeling of close, personal intimacy in the relationship of uterine kin is best brought out in the native attitude about sexual relations between *saarət*. It is incestuous if the couple know they are *saarət*, however distant their uterine connexion. It is like incest between own brother and sister, and is viewed in the same way as the latter. Tallensi think of it with disgust rather than horror. Sexual desire for a known *soog* relative is so utterly inconsistent with the general attitude of uterine kin towards each other that it is unthinkable in a decent person. It is a taboo (*kihər*) which normal people take for granted. There are no ritual or jural sanctions against incest with a *soog*, and Tallensi would say that there is no need for them. At no point are the relations of uterine kin subject to sanctions; 'I will not refuse him, I will not deny him anything', says the native of a *soog*, thinking of this as an axiomatic feature of *soog* kinship.

582 602 Marriage between *saarət* is, of course, forbidden, and the elders of the lineages concerned would never allow it if the couple are known to be uterine kin. But sometimes, owing to the devious ramifications of uterine kinship, a married couple discover that they are distant *saarət*. [586] If there are no children, or the elders of the girl's lineage want a pretext for taking her from her husband, they might insist on the dissolution of the marriage. If a child has been born, or the couple refuse to part for any other reason, their kinship must be ritually severed. The rite is very simple. The essential act consists of the husband and wife grasping a calabash with one hand each and wrenching it in halves. This symbolizes the splitting (*bɔk*) of their kinship.

602 It is not uncommon for a man to have one or more *saarət* (other than his siblings) among the members of his own clan. They may be the sons of one mother by different fathers, or the sons of sisters, or of more distantly related uterine kinswomen who married into the same clan. In such cases one can see how the loyalties based on uterine kinship are distinguished from the ties of lineage membership. Yikpemdaan and Tinta'alɔm of Tɔŋ-Kuorɔg, the two senior elders of Kuorɔg section, are *saarət*, but members of different segments of the section. Tinta'alɔm's children and brothers' children speak of Yikpɛmdaan as their father (*ba*); Yikpɛmdaan and Tinta'alɔm speak of each other as brothers, since their mothers were full sisters. Their mutual affection and attachment, going back to the childhood of Yikpɛmdaan, when he lived for a time with Tinta'alɔm, are well known. Tinta'alɔm

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER IV

HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY

The General and the Particular in the Pattern of Domestic Relations

611 IT is clear from Chapter II that *nyam*, the fact of birth, the event that fixes one's descent immutably, takes precedence over all other conditions governing the social relations and the social roles of a Talɔŋ. This principle comes out in all departments of Tale social life, and nowhere so plainly as in the organization of domestic life. We turn, therefore, to examine the working of kinship in the domestic family, which we have called the focal field of kinship.

593 It is important to bear in mind that kinship relations in the family group are inter-articulated in a single configuration, dominated by the *patria potestas* of the male head of the family. The relations of father and child are coloured by the relations of mother and child that coexist with them, and the relations of mother and child acquire a special accent in the context of the relations between co-wives. Particular domestic relationships appear in their true light only when they are considered as part of the total pattern. The polarity of *dug* and *yir* moulds them all; all play a part in the balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces in the structure of the family. All, moreover, are subject to the pull and pressure of genealogical connexions and groupings outside the family circle.

593 The natives are very conscious of this, and take it into account in the management of their lives. They say, for instance, that a woman's
●606 parents continue to have great influence over her for some years after her marriage and that is why her husband must keep on the good side of his parents-in-law. 'Don't you know what in-lawship means?' said Bayankura, somewhat lugubriously, when I found him hard at work helping to rebuild his father-in-law's homestead. Again, Tiezien's family believed that he was much under the influence of his senior wife, Tanzoo. So when by various pretexts he caused both of his late brother's sons to lose the young wives they had recently taken, they ascribed it morosely to Tanzoo's jealousy of their mother, Tiezien's second wife.

181 We shall not attempt a full-dress study of Tale family life; here we are concerned only with the structurally significant norms. In a society as homogeneous and economically undifferentiated as that of the Tallensi, people of the same sex, age, and social standing tend to have the same life history; and organized units such as the lineage and the family tend to have a stereotyped structure and development. The common denominators of action stand out.

Ref 156 Yet it is a constantly reiterated assumption of the natives that no two

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

solve the conflict between these antithetic bonds in favour of her conjugal family.

Tallensi say that a woman is like a stranger or guest (both ideas are contained in the native word *saan*) in her husband's house during the first year or two of marriage. Standing outside the intimate life and vital concerns of the family, she cannot yet be relied upon. Gradually she grows accustomed (*malɔm*) to her conjugal family; and after some years, when she has several children, she becomes so far absorbed into the family that full trust can be reposed in her and she takes a full and self-confident part in family affairs.

It needs little observation to see how apt is this description of the gradual absorption of women into their husbands' families. On a visit to a homestead to which a newly wedded wife has just been added, one can easily observe the 'shyness (*valɔm*)', as the Tallensi call it, of the new wife (*pɔya*) and her husband (*set*) towards each other. This goes farther than formal etiquette. Good manners require that a woman should always show respect to her husband in public. She walks behind him if they have to go anywhere together on a ceremonial occasion. She stoops or kneels whenever she offers him food or drink. But this behaviour is customary for a woman with all adult males other than her own children. It is a sign of the general attitude of respect due from women to men in a society so dominated in public social relations by the patriarchal principle. The 'shyness' of a newly married wife comes out in other ways. She tries to keep out of her husband's way as much as possible during the day, busying herself zealously with the household tasks given to her by her mother-in-law. She is submissive to all his requests. She speaks to him only when she is spoken to. She takes no initiative in anything.

This attitude is even more marked in her behaviour towards her parents-in-law (*dayaam*, pl. *dayaanam*), to whom she is bound to show formal deference at all times, and to her adult brothers-in-law, with whom she must always be circumspect because of the incest barrier which we shall discuss later. It often comes into her private relations with her husband if he is much older than she is. She will flirt and be more companionable with a young husband, in private, natives say; for he is probably like herself a *tarɔm*, junior, under authority, and connubial joys mean so much to him that he comes down to an equal footing with his wife for their sake.

The Relationships of a Wife with her Relatives-in-law

A woman does not avoid any of her relatives-in-law or her husband, nor are her relations with them regulated by strict prescription. She maintains a general attitude of deference, modesty, and complaisance towards them. A well-behaved young wife is industrious and obedient in helping her mother-in-law with her domestic work, and she will be self-effacing and deferential towards her father-in-law, her husband,

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 and his adult brothers. The only relaxation of this attitude occurs with her sisters-in-law (*pɔɣakie*, pl. *pɔɣakies*). With them, often her equals
607 in years and her companions in work, she can laugh and play and joke. Like herself, they are already, or are fated to be, married out of their natal families to 'strangers'. This is a bond of fellowship superadded to that of sex and often age. But they also belong to the opposite camp. Identifying themselves with their brothers and their lineage, they sometimes speak of her as 'our wife (*ti pɔɣa*)', and she sometimes refers to them as 'my husbands (*n-sɛrib*)'. They will take the side of their brother if she comes into conflict with her husband or deserts him. Her relationship with them is typical of the ambivalence that underlies the joking relationship among the Tallensi.

601 In the first year or so of marriage a woman tries to avoid having to
576 address her male in-laws and her husband directly in public. If they address her it will be in a somewhat formal and courteous way, her husband and his brothers using her clan name, her father-in-law addressing her as 'mother (*ma*)'. She is most at home—but in a very deferential manner—with her mother-in-law, in whose rooms and under whose care she lives, whose domestic duties she largely takes over, and who also addresses her as 'mother (*ma*)'. To any member of the family she speaks of her father-in-law as 'father (*ba*)' and of her mother-in-law as 'mother (*ma*)', and she addresses the latter by this term. Outside the family a woman speaks of her husband as 'my husband (*n-sɛt*)'; of his brothers as 'my older' or 'my younger husband (*n-sɛt-bier*, or *n-sɛt-pit*)'; and of his parents as 'my father (mother)-in-law (*n-daŋaamdoog*, masc.—*n daŋaampɔk*, fem.)'. Her husband speaks of her as 'my wife (*mpɔɣa*)'; his brothers as 'my older or younger brother's wife (*m-bier* or *m-pit pɔɣa*)', or in some situations as 'our (i.e. the lineage's) wife'; her parents-in-law as *sampɔɣa*.

606 The status of a woman in her conjugal family is most sharply focused in her relations with her parents-in-law. For it is they who form the axis around which the family revolves. Its unity, its independence, the management of its material affairs, and the maintenance of its well-being all reside in them. Though the general impression one receives of a woman's relationship with her parents-in-law is one of affability and ease, it is potentially anomalous, particularly in the early years. As their son's wife she is in the position of a daughter to them. She will give valuable and indispensable service in the economy of the household. She will produce children to augment the family and the lineage. But, as she herself knows and feels, she is an intruder. She is made to feel this in the early years of marriage even if, as so often happens, she belongs to an adjacent clan, and was personally well known to her conjugal family before marriage. For marriage creates entirely new associations between individuals and families. If she was married by elopement she knows that she is on trial, perhaps the object of a

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

hidden struggle between her husband and her father-in-law. Though she is in the position of a daughter to her parents-in-law, she cannot feel for them nor they for her the love and devotion that moderate the strictness of parental authority and give a tone of easy-going friendliness to the normal intercourse of parents and children. One side of the parent-child relationship, the authority of parents over their children, looms foremost for her. The cleavage between successive generations and the tension that holds them apart, are underlined at the expense of the mutual devotion and identification of parents and children.

Parents-in-law, for their part, have ambivalent feelings towards their daughter-in-law. Behind their ostensible pride and pleasure in their son's marriage lurks the shadow of resentment. A man realizes that his son's marriage is the first step in his eventual emancipation. It is the seed from which grow responsibilities and interests that compete with those he owes to his natal family and threaten his loyalties to them. A woman sees in her son's marriage a sign that her reproductive life is over. Tallensi hold that it is improper, and to some extent mystically dangerous, for mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to bear at the same time. Hence parents often, though covertly, try to prevent a first son marrying young, or else, in self-defence, display exaggerated conceit at a son's early marriage. Only the coming of grandchildren, coinciding as it does with the habituation of the daughter-in-law to her conjugal family, and itself a distinction inspiring great pride and joy in the grandparents, compensates for the renunciations implicitly required of a man's parents when he takes a wife.

Inevitably, therefore, there is an element of tension in the relations of parents-in-law and daughter-in-law. The fact that the daughter-in-law is under the power of her husband's family, particularly of her father-in-law, and that they are formally, if not openly, opposed to her paternal family, to which, however, she is still attached by the strongest ties of duty and sentiment, may add to the strain. It may be quite superficial in a well-regulated family or in the case of an approved marriage, apparent only in the conventions of speech and etiquette. In an ill-managed family, or if there is opposition to the marriage, it often comes out openly. Parents-in-law complain of their daughter-in-law's manners or actions, or mother-in-law and daughter-in-law have petty squabbles. As time passes the strain is mitigated with the gradual absorption of the daughter-in-law into her conjugal family. It is never wholly erased. Even in so well organized a family as Ɔmara's, there was a standing feud between his younger wives and his mother. The old woman, half-sunk in the hebetude of senility, complained ceaselessly of the neglect of her daughters-in-law; and they often quarrelled with her vehemently on account of what they regarded as her exorbitant demands on their firewood, their labour, and their food-supply.

The conventions of behaviour followed by parents-in-law and daugh-

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 578 ter-in-law towards one another, and the terminology of address associated with them, put a protective fence between parents-in-law and daughter-in-law. 'My mother', or 'my father', in this context means 'a person to whom I owe punctilious respect'. The relation is one of reciprocal respect, because it is based on something in the nature of a contract. The daughter-in-law's attitude is an exaggeration of one aspect of filial respect towards the parents. This aspect is more prominent in kinship relations outside the focal field and in ceremonial relations patterned on, but structurally different from, true parent-child relations, than in the latter. It is reminiscent of the behaviour of his clansmen to a chief or tendaana on formal occasions, when his symbolic position as father (*ba*) of the clan is most apparent.

Naturally the barrier between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is stricter than between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law owing to the difference of sex, though it is not obvious to an outsider. Once she is accepted, a man usually treats his daughter-in-law with kindness and affability. In public he treats her with a familiar friendliness, in the same way as if she were his daughter. But whereas he scolds his daughter without hesitation, he does not scold or criticize his daughter-in-law directly. It would offend and hurt her, and upset their amicable relations. The barrier between them—and this applies in a lesser degree to the mother-in-law too—can be maintained only on the basis of mutual courtesy and affability. Where the barrier is most sharply emphasized is not in their public intercourse but in their relations as members of opposite sexes. For a man to have sexual relations with, or even sit on the same mat as, his daughter-in-law is a sin of the first magnitude. *'Dɔn n-kih pam!* (that is an extreme taboo)', say the natives, with every sign of repugnance. It is a sin that can never be wholly atoned for. Sooner or later the culprits will be slain by the ancestor spirits; for, like incest with a father's wife of which it is the counterpart, it destroys irreparably the moral and religious bonds of father and son. I heard of an old man who died some years ago who used to have his daughters-in-law sit on his lap, and 'play' with them. This, my informants said scoffingly, was just the ill manners of an old dotard. But Gunyam's seduction of his daughter-in-law was revealed to me with bated breath. It was no wonder, my informant said, that he died soon after, and that misfortunes crowded on his family.

[835]

The relations of daughter-in-law to parents-in-law are well summed up in the statement always made by Tallensi if they are asked for an explanation of the terminology of address used between these relatives. They say: 'We stand in awe of them (parents-in-law or daughters-in-law)', (*ti zootbame*, lit. 'we fear them').[1]

601 [1] This terminology of address is of considerable theoretical interest. Rattray (op. cit., p. 6) attributes the custom of addressing a daughter-in-law as 'mother' (customary also amongst the Gonsi, Namnam, and other peoples adjacent to

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

to strike her. Her parents-in-law, for instance, despite their authority over her, would not do so. If anything, they would try to restrain their son from beating her. Only her husband has that combination of authority and intimacy in relation to her which permits the use of physical force upon her.

But flight is not the only weapon a woman has in order to maintain her rights and privileges in her conjugal family. Once she is fairly free from the leading strings of her mother-in-law, she is the mistress of her time and energies. It is an accepted axiom of married life, which no man questions, that a wife is free to dispose of her time as she pleases, provided she does not hamper the essential economic activities of the household, or neglect her children, or remain away from home for unwarrantable periods or at times—e.g. during the Great Festivals—when all the members of the family should be together. The routine of domestic tasks, over which men have no control, is a strong line of defence against the interference of men in their wives' disposal of their time. But differences of opinion on this matter are a common cause of squabbles between husband and wife. A young woman dresses up to go to market; her husband objects, saying that other men will be paying court to her there, or that the children will be left hungry all day; she insists; and a heated argument ensues. Nine times out of ten the woman has her way. Occasionally the husband succeeds in stopping her, by persuasion or by force. It is only at sowing or harvest time, or when, for instance, preparations for an important ceremony are in hand, that a man has full control over his wife's time.

At all times a wife's freedom to arrange her work and her leisure as best suits her may subject her husband to inconvenience. If, at the end of the day, she is too preoccupied or too tired to cook, he can but grumble and go hungry. And if he annoys her she can make a point of being too busy to attend to some want of his or too tired to cook the evening meal. This, men say frankly, is one of the strongest arguments in favour of keeping on good terms with one's wife.

Tallensi regard these utilitarian rights and duties, services and attentions of husband and wife towards each other as a most important feature of marriage. But it is clear that they do not constitute the unique relationship that distinguishes the marriage tie from other social ties of the Tallensi. Thus a woman performs much the same utilitarian services as daughter in her natal home, and as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law in her conjugal home. They are but a part of the whole configuration of co-operation, mutual help, reciprocal services, etiquette, and mutual tolerance that keep the wheels of family life running smoothly. And it is clear, also, that they imply the existence of common interests that create a sense of mutual moral obligation.

This underlying bond of mutual moral obligation is the basic sanction of reciprocity and co-operation in the domestic family. In the case of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

765 a man dies leaving young wives without infants his funeral ceremonies
581 are hurried on. Tallensi do not believe that young widows without
834 infants will remain chaste for long out of a sense of duty or for fear of mystical penalties. A man's widow, in short, remains his wife, sexually bound to him, as long as his social personality continues to be recognized. Death alone does not expunge a man's social personality. The management of his property, his social roles, and all his rights and responsibilities, continue to be exercised by proxy in his name after his death until his
[768] funeral ceremonies are finished; for it is by these ritual acts that his social personality is expunged. His property then passes to his heir, his social roles to his successor, and his widow is free to remarry.

The Husband's Relationship with his Affines

593 The sexual bond of husband and wife is also, as we have noticed, the
562 critical element that discriminates a woman's marital relationship with her husband from her filial relationship with her father or with anyone who takes over his social role. As we have mentioned before, the economic duties and rights of a woman in her conjugal family are not very different from those that she exercises in her natal family before marriage or if she comes to live with the latter at any time. Her jural status as a minor under her husband's or father-in-law's authority corresponds to her jural status in her father's family. It is essentially with respect to her reproductive capacity that her role and status as wife and mother are sharply separated from her role and status as daughter and sister.

This will be clearer if we look first at the general rules and conventions of a son-in-law's relations with his father-in-law's family and lineage.

602 The term *deema* (pl. *deenam*), affine, correctly used applies to wife's
562 parent and daughter's husband, and to anyone identified with them in a particular situation. It is the self-reciprocal term of address between these relatives, as well as the term of reference for them. I have heard it used as a special gesture of consideration and courtesy by a man to his brother's wife, but this is not usual. For the relationship between affines, in the Tale sense of this term, is not quite the same as that of a woman with her husband's parents and siblings. A man's affines have no authority over him. The tensions connected with common residence are absent. There are no common economic, jural, or ritual interests between affines.

602 As in all Tale social relations, differences of personality and the flexi-
● 606 bility of custom result in variations in the actual behaviour of affines to one another that sometimes obscure the real nature of the relationship. I have seen a man chaff his mother-in-law (*deempɔk*) in a way that would be regarded as excessively familiar by the majority of natives. In a well-established marriage one often finds great friendliness and mutual good-

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

will between parents-in-law and son-in-law. They visit one another regularly, help one another more than the strict letter of custom requires, and are proud of one another. In particular, this positive element in the relationship of affines becomes attached to the brother-in-law (*dakii*); and it is not uncommon for brothers-in-law to be real friends if they live near one another, or belong to allied clans, and if there are no bride-price debts outstanding. In former days a man would protect an affine belonging to another clan from molestation by his own clansmen, in the same way as he protected a kinsman of another clan. I have seen men show deep grief at the death of a parent-in-law or brother-in-law.

On the other hand, the sense of an underlying divergence or even conflict of interests that is so conspicuous in the early stages of a marriage never wholly vanishes. The intercourse of affines always tends to be coloured by the feeling that they might be at strife at any time. This is what makes *deen*, affinity, the arch symbol of all that is most antithetical to *dɔŋam*, consanguinity. A formal distance must be maintained between affines; and the passage of time merely blurs but never obliterates this.

A man must show formal deference to his parents-in-law or their representatives, especially in the early years of marriage, and always in ceremonial situations. When he encounters them, or visits them, he sits down to greet them in the posture of respect—crossed legs (*pɔt nɔba*), bowed and hatless head—adopted before a chief, a high ritual functionary, or an ancestor shrine. He is a 'stranger' in their house and they in his house. He is 'shy' of them, and must be on his best behaviour in their presence. It would be most unmannerly, almost immodest, for father-in-law and son-in-law to eat together. In certain circumstances this attitude is extended to the whole settlement of a father-in-law's clan. For example, one rarely sees a respectable Tongo elder eating bought porridge publicly in the market at Ba'ari or Sii. Partly it is unbecoming for the head of a family, as people might gossip, saying that he had no food at home. But the main reason is that Tongo people marry men and women from Sii and Ba'ari. A Tongo man thinks of these places as the homes of possible or actual affines, and he would feel very ill at ease eating bought porridge publicly in the presence of an affine. When a man's parents-in-law or their representatives come on a visit to his house, he must show them honour (*giem ba*). The officious hospitality showered on a visiting father- or mother-in-law, or anybody representing them, by a son-in-law, and vice versa, makes a totally different impression from the friendly welcome offered to a kinsman from another settlement.

Affines have no axiomatic ties. Their relationship rests on a well-defined jural compact. Their parallel interests in the woman who links them, and in her children, are clearly differentiated. This means that a son-in-law has to make special efforts to keep the goodwill of his

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

602 parents-in-law, particularly in the early years while he is not quite sure of his wife. If his father-in-law sends for him to help with the hoeing, or with house building, or his mother-in-law requests him to help thatch 606 her rooms, he must respond with alacrity and bring as large a party of his clansmen to assist him as he can manage. In this way a man shows honour to, ingratiates himself with (*giem*), his affines; for these services are not enforceable obligations, and usually cease to be asked for after the marriage has become stabilized. They bear no relation to the bride-price, and are lavishly recompensed. A visiting work-party brought by a son-in-law expects generous hospitality, and the father-in-law, if he is a reputable man, would feel that he had lost dignity if he did not feed and entertain the work-party well. But though these services cannot be enforced, no man would risk offending his parents-in-law by refusing them. These material demonstrations of respect, gratitude, and goodwill are essential for the smooth working of a relationship artificially established by a jural compact. Parents-in-law praise and like an obliging son-in-law, even if he has not paid the bride-price, the natives say.

602 This is one side of the affinal relationship. It also has an aspect of 607 friendliness and familiarity, as we have seen, which comes out most conspicuously in a man's relations with his siblings-in-law. A man has a joking relationship with his siblings-in-law similar to that of his wife with his sisters and distant clansmen. It goes so far that a man may sleep with an unmarried sister-in-law (*dakiipɔk*) who is visiting his house, and is therefore in that situation identified with his wife. A man's siblings-in-law belong to the familiar and friendly generation of his wife. They are identified with her. But they also belong to the potentially hostile lineage of her father, whose heir a brother-in-law will one day be. In very many ways a man's siblings-in-law are sympathetically drawn to him; but their rights in relation to his wife may pit them against him. The convention of joking serves to reconcile these two potentially discordant elements of their relationship. But when the marriage has lasted many years, and the possibility of a conflict of rights disappears, the element of friendliness in the relationship can assert itself without prejudice to its jural aspect. Thus, conventional teasing usually drops out of the intercourse of siblings-in-law of long standing.

606 The formal distance between affines is further shown in the duties 764 and obligations to which a man is liable on the death of a son-in-law or 431 parent-in-law. On the death of a parent-in-law a man is obliged to attend the mortuary and funeral ceremonies. He should come escorted by a large party of clansmen and their wives, and the mourning party should wear their finest clothes and be led by drummers and musicians. A son-in-law should provide the gravestone for a parent-in-law. He should distribute money freely to the grave-diggers, to the drummers, singers, and musicians, whose raucous noise stimulates the crowd

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

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and adds prestige to the occa[illegible] the widows, to the old women tending the corpse, and to the [illegible]cing extravagantly in honour of the dead.[1]

A son-in-law should help [illegible] grave and to carry the corpse to the grave, or depute a clansman to do these tasks on his behalf. These duties are undertaken readily and with pride, as a rule, whether or not a man has been on good terms with his deceased parent-in-law, though there are no sanctions for enforcing them. Men perform them as a mark of respect to their affines, both to the dead and the living, and it would be a serious affront, causing friction with his living in-laws and deep resentment on the part of his wife, if they were neglected. In addition, there is the incentive of personal satisfaction, for they give a grand opportunity for self-display. The mourning party he brings, his largesse, and the conspicuous assistance he gives at the burial, are all means of showing off his personal importance and his excellence as a son-in-law.

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A son-in-law is obliged also to send certain food contributions of prescribed kind and quantity to the funeral of a parent-in-law. Small contributions accompany the mourning party. The principal contribution is due on 'the day of sleeping at the funeral (*kogbedaar*)'. This consists of a sheep or goat cut up and ready cooked, together with a large basket of slabs of porridge and a pot of relish. Unlike the duties previously mentioned, these food contributions are 'debts' (*samər*, pl. *sama*)—i.e. obligatory gifts. If a man cannot pay any of them when they are due, he must do so whenever he is able to; and if he omits to do so altogether before his death, his son will have to settle the debt. For here a sanction that operates in many social and religious obligations of the Tallensi comes into play. If a man dies without paying a ceremonial debt of this kind, then, in accordance with the principle of equivalent returns, he must be done by likewise. *His* son cannot accept the same food contribution from *his* son-in-law until the debt is paid; and this is felt as an affront to his spirit. His son would therefore take steps immediately to set the matter right. In fact it appears to be very rare in normal circumstances, for a man to omit these duties altogether during his lifetime.

Conversely, if a man's daughter or his son-in-law dies, he in turn sends a mourning party to represent him and convey his condolences. He is also obliged to send certain customary food gifts. But these are small in quantity; for though they represent a return in kind for what is due from a son-in-law in like circumstances, they are made by a superior to an inferior, by one who has already conferred a benefit that can never be

[1] The currency chiefly used on such occasions consists of cowrie shells (*laɣapielɔb*, pl. *laɣapiela*, lit. white money, the original form *laɣoh*, pl. *ligəri*, being nowadays restricted to British currency), now worth only a hundred a penny. A man can be generous for a shilling, and prodigal for half a crown.

[436]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

fully repaid in the bestowal of his daughter as a wife. A similar sanction to that mentioned in the case of a son-in-law operates here.

If one watches the behaviour of men at the funeral of an affine, one can see that they feel themselves to be under strong constraint. They and their clansmen accompanying them keep together, and when there are no ceremonies or festivities in progress they stay apart from the rest of the crowd. In former days a mourning party of affines always carried arms, and it is said that fighting sometimes broke out at funerals. When Tallensi comment on the ceremonial obligations of affines, they emphasize the feeling of constraint associated with them. One is impressed by the contrast between this attitude and the attitudes associated with the ceremonial obligations that follow on the death of a clansman or cognatic kinsman. It is as if the native feels his ceremonial obligations to an affine to be forced on him from outside, without his choice, whereas he seems to accept his duties and obligations on the death of a kinsman willingly and from within.

It is evident that reciprocity between affines is different in character from that which prevails between people who have a bond of common interests, such as members of the same family. There is not the same free give and take. When gifts or services pass between affines, whether they are prescribed or ostensibly spontaneous, there is a deliberate effort to counterbalance them. A sort of book-keeping occurs. This appears most clearly in the jural formalities of marriage, but it comes out quite plainly in the apparently voluntary services and reciprocal hospitality of son-in-law and father-in-law. The side that benefits feels impelled to make an equivalent return in order not to give the other party grounds for a grudge. And people who flout this convention not only upset their good relations with their affines and so provide pretexts for conflict with them, but also incur the censure of public opinion.

One incident will illustrate this. Banɔrəg asked his son-in-law, a member of an adjacent clan, to come and help him finish the hoeing of his home farm. The young man brought a couple of his clansmen and they worked with zeal from early morning till sunset. Then they went home, politely refusing Banɔrəg's invitation to come home with him for the evening meal. Had they come as a formal hoeing party they would have been entitled to a good meal as a reward at the end of the day. But they had come informally, and their own homes were near enough for them to get back in time for the evening meal. They spoke of their day's work for Banɔrəg as a simple act of courtesy to a father-in-law. As we watched them saunter homewards, Banɔrəg said to me 'Sons-in-law are shy (*deenam mmar vi*). They can't come home with you (their father-in-law) and eat with your children (as if they were your kin)'. But next day Banɔrəg sent a large basket of millet flour to his daughter with orders to cook a generous meal for her husband and his friends. He would feel ashamed, he told me, if he did not 'thank' the young men

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

thus; and besides, people would say he was mean. This attitude does not occur with the true reciprocity that prevails in the domestic family or between near kin.

Sex in the Relationship of Affines

While, therefore, the relations of affines assume the existence of a formal distance between them, they are not encumbered by avoidances or other social barriers that make friendliness impossible or ordinary social intercourse a burden. There is amity as well as opposition in their relationship. In one matter only is there a rigorous barrier between affines. In respect to sex and procreation they are strictly separate. The emphasis is on the deed, not the word; there is no prohibition against talking to or in the presence of an affine about sexual matters.

One aspect of this ban on bringing sex into the relationship of affinity is the native attitude about a sexual offence against an affine. For a man to seduce the wife of an affine is almost as heinous a transgression as intercourse with the wife of a man of one's own expanded family, though it is not regarded as incest; and the offence is nearly as bad if the culprit is a close agnate of the woman's husband's affine or the woman the wife of a close agnate of the affine concerned. It is a grave offence, also, if a man or his close agnate abducts the wife of an affine or his close agnate. There are no explicit mystical sanctions against either of these wrongs, but Tallensi describe them as 'a thing of enormous evil (*yelbiog tenta'ar*)' bound to bring ill fortune on the wrongdoer, and in any case involving such serious social consequences that no man in his senses would descend to them. They think of the possible culprit as being the son-in-law, and they say that the father-in-law would take away his daughter and the bride-price be forfeited. Affines are bound to fall out with one another now and then. Usually apologies proffered through an intermediary lead to their making it up again. But in the case of a sexual offence against a father-in-law, it is quite impossible to beg or receive pardon. For it is a sin; it 'pollutes the room (*sayam dug*)' of the injured man.[1]

'Pollution of the room' in this sense is very rare among the Tallensi. But it is not unknown for a man to abduct the wife of the father- or brother-in-law (true or classificatory) of one of his own clansmen. The elders of both the abductor's medial lineage and the wronged husband's medial lineage are then extremely indignant. The latter demand the return of 'their' wife; and in all the cases I have come across the former see to it at once that the woman is sent back to her husband.

[1] Cf. p. 28 above. *Sayam dug* has the double sense of a mystical defilement of the sleeping-room—the inner sanctuary of family and of reproductive life—and of an irreparable infringement of lineage rights. If the offender is a distant clansman of the true son-in-law, a ritual reconciliation between the two lineages might be allowed after the defilement has been ritually removed.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 It is base to seduce an affine's wife, or the wife of his near clansman, anywhere, but it is abominable to do it at the injured man's own house. Strictly speaking, 'polluting the room' refers to the seduction of a father-in-law's wife, or the wife of his close agnate, at his house or in his settlement. If a man's father-in-law or one of the latter's close agnates seduces the son-in-law's wife (of another clan than theirs), or the wife of one of his close agnates, it is generally treated as a particularly reprehensible form of adultery. The son-in-law would not, for example, necessarily divorce his wife on that account. A ritual reconciliation will be made and the matter closed. Tallensi say such offences are extremely rare, and I have never heard of a case.

835 The offence borders on a sin if it is committed by a son-in-law or someone genealogically identified with him, on the one hand because of his quasi-filial relationship with his father-in-law through his wife, and on the other because of the sex barrier between affines. The striking thing is that it is a particularly heinous case of 'polluting the room' of a father-in-law for the son-in-law to have sexual relations with his own wife at her father's house. The bond which most closely unites a married couple is the relationship that cuts the woman off most completely from her filial relationship with her paternal family. As we have noted before, if her husband has sexual relations with her in her father's house her status as wife and mother is confounded with her status as sister and daughter; her husband's status as son-in-law is confounded with his status as father and husband in his own family. If the husband did not abrogate his marital rights at his wife's father's house, an insoluble conflict would arise both on the jural level and in their emotional relations. So strict is this taboo that it extends to any man of the son-in-law's lineage, and any daughter of the father-in-law's lineage, more particularly within the limits of the medial lineage. A man may not even meet his wife face to face on the path leading from her parental home to his, if she is on her way from her parents' house to her husband's; for this would symbolize a wish to treat her as his wife at her father's house.

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783 An accidental breach of this symbolic taboo can be mended, though not without difficulty, by a ritual reconciliation. A breach of the prohibition against sexual relations between husband and wife at the latter's paternal home (and *vir*, home, in this context includes the whole settlement), or the equivalent offence committed by a close agnate of the husband, is irreparable. The marriage must be broken up, and children borne of it may be taken away by the woman's father. If this is not done, disaster would fall on everybody concerned. The bride-price is forfeited by the offending husband.

584 Opportunities and temptations to break these taboos often occur, for instance when a young man takes a party of his clansmen to spend a few days with his father-in-law in order to help him with some work. A man's wife generally accompanies him on such occasions. The visitors

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

expect not only to be well fed, but also to be well entertained. They expect their stay to be made pleasant by dancing, feasting, and flirtations with unmarried girls of the host's clan, and many marriages come about as the result of such contacts. Young men going on such parties are more likely to grouse at their treatment if there were not enough girls to flirt with than if they were stingily fed. But it would be a gross breach of hospitality, as well as an irreparable wrong, if any of the visitors seduced any of the girls; and the son-in-law and his wife always sleep in separate rooms.

These parties are extremely common. Towards the end of the dry season, when house-building is in progress, or in the latter half of the rainy season, when hoeing is very active, there are weeks during which a visiting party of in-laws can be found in a large settlement almost every day. Yet the sexual taboos we have mentioned are rarely broken. I was told of a few alleged cases that had occurred. But the only well-authenticated case I heard of was during my second visit to Taleland, when it came up in connexion with a court case over the woman who was concerned. The scorn and disgust with which people spoke of these cases showed how strongly the natives feel about these taboos.

The taboo against a woman's bearing her husband's child in her father's house links on to this complex of ideas. It is also a 'pollution of the room' of the father-in-law, and a very serious matter. For, as we have previously mentioned, it puts the child thus born into an anomalous position which is dangerous to his welfare. But a breach of it happens so often by accident that it does not inspire repugnance. The pollution can easily be removed by the husband's sending a placatory gift, as we have already recorded, to his father-in-law to 'clear away the blood (*vaa ziem*)' of the delivery. At the same time Tallensi do not like this to happen, and a woman near her term is not encouraged to visit her parents. I have known a man to be so angry with a wife who disobediently went to her father's house towards the end of her pregnancy and gave birth there that he refused at first to have her back.

A man also pollutes his father-in-law's room if he vomits (*ti*) in his father-in-law's house. It is unlucky. The son-in-law and his wife 'will not have it well (*ku nye ssmma*) with them'; but amends can be made in the same way as for the birth of a child in the father-in-law's house. The symbolism is obscure and the natives cannot explain it. Vomiting is normally taken as a symptom of illness. It may be that they feel vomiting in such circumstances to be a sign of rejecting the hospitality of parents-in-law and therefore a sign of inner hostility to them. The context of this taboo suggests, however, that vomiting in a father-in-law's house is connected with the bearing of a child there, the symbolism being taken either from morning sickness or arising indirectly through the association of regurgitated food with the fluids discharged in childbirth.